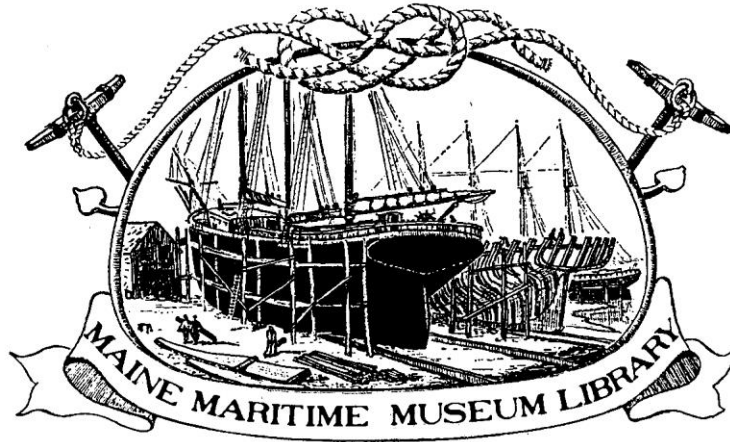


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**Inventory for
Manuscript Collection
MS - 121**

**Captain John E. Yates Family Papers
1870-1892**

by
Elisabeth Meier
March 2019

½ box
0.2 linear feet
Accession no. 2017.37.4, .5, and .8

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Abstract

John E. Yates, Captain (1845-1914)

Papers, 1870-1892

½ box

Master mariner from Round Pond, Maine

This collection contains two account books and a folder of family letters from Captain John E. Yates of Round Pond, Bristol, Maine. One account book contains records of Yates's time in command of the *A.L. Fitch* (schooner) and *Hattie G. Dixon* (bark) in the coasting and West Indies trade. The other has seamen's slop accounts with the *Willie Reed* (ship) on a voyage to Japan. The letters, written by Yates's second wife, Georgia, are a detailed record of family life at sea aboard the *Willie Reed*.

Gift of Faye Cornog.

MS-121. Accession #2017.37.4, .5 and .8.

Finding aid (folder level control) in repository.

Added entries—persons:

Yates, Georgia Townsend (1867-1955)

Yates, John E., Captain (1845-1914)

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels):

A.L. Fitch (schooner)

Hattie G. Dixon (bark)

Rockie E. Yates (three-mast schooner)

Willie Reed (ship)

Added entries—key terms:

Cape Horn trade

Case oil trade

Clothing and dress

Coal trade

Coasters (ships)

Families at sea

Guano trade

Lumber trade

Merchant seamen

Salt trade

Schooners

Seafaring life

Ship captains

Ship captains' wives

Ships

Sugar trade

Wages

West Indies trade

Acquisition

This collection was given to Maine Maritime Museum by Faye Cornog of Springfield, Illinois, in 2017. Mrs. Cornog was the wife of Geoffrey Yates Cornog, son of Marjorie Yates Cornog and grandson of John E. and Georgia T. Yates.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on this collection.

Physical Condition

The collection is largely in good condition. The spines of the bound volumes are damaged and often missing, but the bindings are firm and pages in good condition.

Processing Notes

The letters from Georgia T. Yates to her family were likely transcribed by later generations of the Yates or Townsend families. The location of the originals is unknown.

The collection arrived with pages of handwritten notes summarizing the contents of and adding genealogical identification to these papers, likely done by the Yates/Cornog families. These are now filed with the processing notes for MS-121; please inquire if needed.

Related Materials

Maine Maritime Museum also has a sextant and two taffrail logs (2017.37.1-3) from Captain John E. Yates, donated by the family.

Historical Note

John Elvin Yates was the son of George and Sophia (Blunt) Yates, born in 1845 in the Round Pond area of Bristol, Maine. He started his seafaring career early, and by 1870 was in command of local coasting schooners. As a captain, he sailed the *A.L. Fitch* (schooner) and the *Rockie E. Yates* (schooner) in the coasting and West Indies trade, then added occasional trips to Europe after taking command of the *Hattie G. Dixon* (bark). By 1890, he was engaged in the case oil and Cape Horn trades on the ship *Willie Reed* of Waldoboro, owned by the firm Yates & Porterfield.

Yates married Rockie E. Cox (1850-1888) in 1872, the same year that the schooner *Rockie E. Yates* was built in Damariscotta. The couple had no children when Rockie died in 1888. Yates remarried Georgia Townsend of Sycamore, Illinois in 1889. They eventually had eight children: Dorothy (b. 1891), twins Margaret and Marjorie (b. 1892), John T. (b. 1895), Oscar T. (b. 1896), Frederick T. (b. 1901), William T. (b. 1904), and Stephen T. (b. 1907).

Georgia Townsend Yates sometimes accompanied her husband to sea aboard the *Willie Reed*. Ashore, she continued to live in Illinois for several years, but apparently re-located to

Bristol, Maine in the late 1890s. By 1900, the family had moved to Boise, Idaho, where John Yates spent the rest of his life as a fruit grower, rancher, and ‘capitalist.’¹

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains two of Captain John E. Yates’s account books and a group of letters written by his wife, Georgia. Together, these span Yates’s seafaring career and contain detailed information on the business of the coasting trade and life aboard a downeaster in the Cape Horn trades.

One account book contains the captain’s accounts with the *A.L. Fitch* (schooner) and *Hattie G. Dixon* (bark), with entries for cargo and port expenses for voyages between 1870 and 1889. Voyages listed here include cargoes of cement, coal, lumber, potatoes, guano, salt and sugar carried between Maine, New York, Florida, Mexico, Cuba and other Caribbean islands, and Antwerp. The volume also includes records of sailor’s wages paid aboard the *A.L. Fitch* and *Rockie E. Yates* (schooner). The other account book contains detailed slop accounts for individual crew members of the *Willie Reed* (ship) on a voyage to Japan, including wages, desertions, and descriptions of clothing and other supplies purchased from the ship’s slop chest.

The letters were written by Yates’s second wife, Georgia, on the same voyage to Japan on the *Willie Reed* in 1891-2. These include detailed descriptions of life at sea and ashore in Japan and Hong Kong, written for Georgia’s family in Illinois. The letters here are transcriptions; the location of the originals is unknown.

Box and Folder List

Box	Folder	
1	1	Account book, <i>A.L. Fitch</i> (schooner), <i>Rockie E. Yates</i> (schooner), and <i>Hattie G. Dixon</i> (bark), 1870-1889
	2	Account book, sailor’s accounts, <i>Willie Reed</i> (ship), 1891-1892
	3	Letters, Georgia T. Yates to family, <i>Willie Reed</i> , 1891-1892

¹ According to data from the US Census, Illinois, Maine, and Idaho birth certificates, and Yates’s Idaho death certificate, all digitized by familysearch.org and accessed in March 2019.